

From the Minister/Growing Together

In the past, I remember saying to folk who went away for part of the winter "welcome back!". I am noticing more and more people have come home from their time away. Yet often when I say "welcome back", there is a smile and I am informed that they watched us online while they were away. That is something that our grandparents might never have even imagined. We can worship no matter where we live and at any time. I am grateful that St. Paul's is forward thinking. We have been taping the service for decades, then livestreaming well before the pandemic and we are now a hybrid congregation that seeks to be the church that excels both in person and virtually. We are growing together in a new way. For those of you who are online, we are so happy to have you join us. We hope that not only are you able to worship but that you sense that you are also part of us here at St. Paul's. Thank you for being part of our faith community. To all of you, whether you worship in person or online, regularly or occasionally, every time you join us I want to say "welcome back!". We are happy that you have chosen to join us.



Appreciation for our Volunteers: Thank you! Thank you!

St. Paul's wants to thank each and everyone of you who volunteer in some way for our church. We are so very grateful for every minute of your time that you give us. Some of you volunteer on Sunday mornings, singing, greeting, taking up the offering, working on the Tech team, reading, serving coffee and bringing in goodies, counting the offering, opening up, and setting up communion. Others are here throughout the week serving on our various committees, cooking meals for fundraising dinners, gardening, providing funeral teas for those grieving, sorting music, hammering, or busy doing odd jobs on the building, whether inside or out. Others are the heart of St. Paul's in our community, visiting homes faithfully, making phone calls to keep in touch, being part of the St. Paul's Meals on Wheels team, feeding the hungry, being part of our Refugee/Newcomers Committee and assisting those in need. Others pick up the mantle of our social justice perspective and seek to work towards a better world for all. Some of you pray for others lifting them up and others knit prayer shawls. The list goes on and on. Without you, we could not be the church we are and do the work and ministry of Christ here. **Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!**

Worship

This week we are looking forward to having the Bay Sounds Children's Choir and VIVO Choir with us in worship on Sunday morning. They will be joining Karen in the Call to the Gathered with a sung response as well as each choir singing a special piece of music. Please join us as we look forward to their gift of music.



<https://youtube.com/live/GPOy6oo7QHg?feature=share>

Worship with us in person on Sundays at 10:00 a.m. or online. Click the link above to go directly to the service or visit our website at www.stpaulsmidland.org

Zoom Coffee Hour

Our next ZOOM coffee hour will take place **this Sunday April 23rd**. Join us virtually for coffee, fellowship and interesting conversation. You can use the same link as before:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89969004401>

Men's Breakfast Gathering

Our next men's breakfast gathering will take place **on Saturday April 29th at 9:00 a.m.** at Mom's Restaurant. Gather with the guys for some food, fellowship and interesting conversation. All men are welcome to join.

Growing Together - Stewardship Message on April 16, 2023,

The good news is... God loves us and there is abundance of life and love all around us. As happens every year, Easter reminds us of the life force that springs forth at this time of year and we are inspired by God's creation.

As you know, your Stewardship Committee is inviting you to join our Stewardship journey. We are calling it "Growing Together". Before Easter, we invited you to reach out to friends and family to invite them to join us for Palm Sunday and Easter services at St Paul's. We want to "grow our congregation and community" as we return to services after the pandemic. In Karen's weekly bulletin and again today, she noted how we are growing together in "faith" and she included the words of gratitude from someone who attended church at Easter. This week, our message is "growing our givings together".

The church has very real expenses and some of them, such as heat and hydro, have increased this year by more than expected due to inflation. As you know, a core of our expenses are to ensure that we have the wonderful staff in place to help us be the church – our Minister, Music Director, Administrator, Office Secretary, Tech Support and now that we and other groups are back in the church in person - our Custodian. It is you and I and our congregation who ensure that we can meet these expenses, by the financial contributions that we make to the church.

As has been pointed out, we have a shortfall in our givings, some of this in part because we have lost many members. It falls on those of us who are here in person and online, to show our love and commitment to the church by supporting its work through our financial contributions. We need your help to reduce this gap between our expenses and our givings. **The good news is** that we know that we can do this!

You may recall that we were in a deficit position at the end of December last year. We asked for your help and you came through – Hallelujah - and we ended our year without a deficit. We also paid for our new furnace in full. Your generosity extended to supporting the sponsorship of refugees and the many other mission and service activities here and abroad. Our gratitude to those of you who give to our church knows no bounds – it is heartfelt and joyful. But we cannot wait until December to reach out for your help again.

One of the key messages that we learn at church is generosity – to share with others and to live out our faith by our generous actions. This is called different things – stewardship, discipleship, generosity, gratitude for God's blessings, addressing inequality, social justice, building community, and honouring those who have passed away. Whatever the words are that give meaning to you - it is such an important part of our job as a church to teach this message, as this generosity also spills out

into our lives in the community. It is known that those who give to their church don't stop there – they often give time and donations to many other different worthy causes in the community.

For whatever reason that you give to St. Paul's, we ask you to consider increasing your givings – if you can and when you can. There are so many ways to give:

1. A one-time contribution towards the deficit will really help at this time.
2. Increasing your weekly offering envelopes or your cash donation in the offering plate or your monthly PAR contribution, if you are able.
3. Other ways to donate – e-transfers, donations online through Canada Helps, donation of shares, and bequests. You can also participate via our fundraising activities, such as the monthly dinners. If you have other ideas, please let us know.
4. For those of you who do pre-authorized monthly givings through your bank (PAR), I can tell you that this method really helps us plan, as it tells us how much we can count on each month.

We have lost some PAR donors and we would like to increase our number of people on PAR by ten. Would you be one of those ten people to make this commitment at this time?

In the coming weeks, we will be setting up a table after church with more information about how to get set up for PAR or do e-transfers or other forms of giving. We invite you to stop by to learn more about this and whether this might work for you for donating to the church. We will also prepare information for those of you who watch online or who get our weekly bulletin.

Please pray on this message and for your vision and hopes for St. Paul's and how you see yourself joining us on this faith journey as we grow together. Bless you and thank you for everything that you do to be the church here at St Paul's and wherever you go in the world. Amen.

-Pat File, on behalf of the Stewardship Committee.

Grandmother's Hands Huronia Pasta Dinner

Gather **this Friday, April 21st** for a pasta dinner at St. Paul's. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. and dinner is served at 6:00 p.m. Cost is by donation only and all proceeds are in support of the Stephen Lewis Foundation's Grandmothers' Campaign. If you would like to attend, invite a friend and reserve a seat with any member of Grandmothers' Hands Huronia or contact Cathy at 705-527-1324.

Official Board Meeting

The Official Board meets next Tuesday, April 25th at 7:00 p.m. via ZOOM. All Board members, please plan to attend if you are able.

Take-Out/Eat-In Dinner



Our next dinner will be next Wednesday, April 26th with a menu of ham and scalloped potatoes, at a cost of \$20 per meal. There will be the option of eating in or take-out (eat in will also include tea or coffee). Please specify your choice when you place your order. Payments are to be made in advance to the church office, by either cash, cheque or e-transfer.

Afterwards, join us and head across the street to the Midland Cultural Center and

catch Shayla Brown's appearance in "A Day in the Life" program if you are interested.

Congregational News

A Day in the Life- Shayla Brown

The Midland Cultural Centre is hosting an interview program with the local actress Shayla Brown on **April 26th**. Shayla Brown has been a long-term active member of St. Paul's. She was involved in Discovery Kids, the Children's Community and VIVO Choir, as well as completed a student co-op with the church. Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about Shayla and her story. Tickets can be purchased online through the MCC website by following the link:

<https://www.midlandculturalcentre.com/adayinthelife>



Family, Fun and Games Night: This all-ages event will take place on **Friday April 28th** from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at St. Paul's in the Great Hall. Please bring your favourite card and board games and enjoy an evening playing with your friends. Pizza will be provided!

Vox Community Choir presents "The Gift of Music – Music for Mom in May" on Saturday May 13th at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are available at Johnstone's Music Land, from VOX Choir members and will also be available at the door.

Volunteer Opportunities: Are you looking for a new challenge or something interesting to do? How about a chance to meet new folks and support St. Paul's with your gift of time? We are looking for people who can join our **Greeters Team** and the **Social Hour Team**. Greeting involves being on a team that will serve one month at a time. You would greet people at the door, welcome them to St. Paul's, offer them a bulletin and demonstrate our hospitality. The more volunteers we have the less often you would need to help. Social Hour involves being part of a team that hosts refreshments following worship two Sundays a month. There are four teams, so the commitment would only be once every two months. Please consider how you can help St. Paul's. For further information, please contact Sheila via email at rmsmt2612@gmail.com, by phone at 705-526-2186, or at church on Sunday.

We are also looking for volunteers who would be willing to work with Karen and the Worship Team to record some outdoor Acknowledgements of the Land. Please contact Karen if you are interested.

Gerry Payne is the Captain of the Greeters for the month of April. Thanks to Gerry and to all our greeters and ushers.

Red Dresses Needed: If you have a red dress that you no longer wear and are willing to donate it, St. Paul's continues to be part of the Red Dress Project to raise awareness and remember our murdered and missing Indigenous women. The dresses will be going up on Wednesday May 3rd so we would appreciate if you could bring the dress to the church on Sundays or during the church office hours, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings if you can. Thank you.

This Week's Minute for Mission

"There is no 'us' and 'them.' We are one community."

First there was the pandemic. Then Russia invaded Ukraine, causing a global energy crisis and worldwide food shortages. In turn, these worsened an already precarious food security situation for many communities.

**GOD'S MISSION
OUR GIFTS**

According to UN OCHA, “the largest global food crisis in modern history is unfolding.” At a time when it feels like there’s a new crisis confronting us each and every day, it’s reassuring to know that Mission & Service partners provide real-time relief around the world on a daily basis. Program Coordinator for Sustainable Development and Humanitarian Response at The United Church of Canada, Thivan Hoang, reminds us, “There is no ‘us’ and ‘them.’ We are one community.”

The United Church is an integral part of a multinational network of partners and ecumenical relationships in over 120 countries. That means whenever there’s an emergency, Mission & Service is there to help. In 2020, a major explosion ripped through Beirut, killing 200 people and injuring 7,000 more. Thanks to generous gifts to Mission & Service, we were able to support partners to respond quickly, providing critically important tools that helped to free people who were trapped under the rubble. As the city recovers, Mission & Service partners continue to assist in rebuilding schools, homes, and other infrastructure.

Although Mission & Service has recently focused on COVID-19 relief, there’s another looming catastrophe that requires our immediate attention. “Without a doubt, climate change worries me the most,” Hoang says. “We’re seeing increases of droughts, floods, and severe storms that have destroyed crops and agricultural land.”

The more we support Mission & Service, the better we can respond to climate calamities. “People who contribute the least to greenhouse gases are often the most impacted by climate change,” Hoang explains.

Your gifts have made—and *will continue to make*—huge differences around the world. A more detailed video, is available on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQfnP7BjaKc>

Blessings everyone,

Minister – Rev. Karen Ptolemy-Stam, St. Paul’s United Church **705-433-1224**
minspucmidland@gmail.com

Church Administrator – Louise Therrien, (Tues. Wed. Thurs.) **705-526-1640**
e-mail stpaulsunited@rogers.com

Louise works at the church office from 8:30 a.m. to noon on Wednesdays only.

Office Secretary – Jane Quigley (Tues. Thurs.) mornings 9:00 a.m. - 12 at the church.
705-526-6077.